

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 5930

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOG, PINT, PE

SUBJECT: PRESSURES CONTINUE ON PERUVIAN INDEPENDENT PRESS

REF: KA) LIMA 5795 (B) LIMA 5778 (C) LIMA 5552

1. PRESSURES ON THE PERUVIAN PRESS CONTINUE UNABATED, AS DOES COUNTER-CAMPAIGN BY LOCAL CONSERVATIVE PRESS IN OPPOSITION TO A GOVERNMENT TAKEOVER. FOLLOWING EL COMERCIO'S DEFENSE OF ITS "REVOLUTIONARY" INTEGRITY JULY 16 (REF A), FOLLOWING DAY GUIDO CHIRINOS LIZARES, DIRECTOR OF AFTERNOON TABLOID ULTIMA HORA, BANNERED FRONT-PAGE STORY WARNING OF POSSIBILITY THAT MARXIST OR PSEUDO-MARXIST PRESS ADVOCATES MAY PUSH GOVT INTO ABSORBING REMAINING PRIVATE SECTOR NEWSPAPERS. THE NEXT DAY, LA PRENSA, PUBLISHED A LENGTHY COMPARISON BETWEEN DIFFERENT WORLD PRESS SYSTEMS, INCLUDING COMMUNIST AND U.S. SYSTEMS, MAKING POINT THAT PUBLIC SECTOR TAKEOVER WOULD LEAD PERU TO ABSOLUTISM.

2. VETERAN INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE MENTIONED REF C NOW STATES THAT ALTHOUGH DOUBTS REMAIN ABOUT EXACT NATURE AND TIMING OF PRESS SEIZURE, GOVERNMENT IS WORKING DILIGENTLY TO PREPARE GROUNDWORK AND THAT A TEN MEMBER GOVERNMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION, INCLUDING ESCUDERO MENTIONED REF B, AS WELL AS AMBASSADOR RUIZ ELDRIDGE, PCD LEADER HECTOR CORNEJO CHAVEZ, RUIZ CARO, AND PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY AUGUSTO

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ZIMMERMAN HAVE ALL HAD HAND IN DRAFTING PRESS LAW WHICH WILL BE

APPROVED BY FIVE-MEMBER CABINET LEVEL TEAM COMPRISING MININTERIOR RICHTER, MINFISHERIES TANTALEAN, MINCOMMERCE BARANDARIAN, MININDUSTRY JIMENEZ DE LUCIO, AND INFORMATION CHIEF GEN, SEGURA. THIS REPRESENTATIVE SAYS THAT GOP CABINET TOOK UP PRESS LAW IN ITS JULY 17 MEETING AND THAT ONE SUGGESTION UNDER CONSIDERATION IS FOR GOP TO PUBLISH DRAFT LAW FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION, SIMILAR TO TREATMENT GIVEN TO DRAFT SOCIAL PROPERTY LAW, BEFORE FINAL PROMULGATION. WHILE NOT CONFIRMING THAT DRAFT LAW WILL BE RELEASED FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION, CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF GENERAL MORALES BERMUDEZ IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS JULY 17 VIRTUALLY CONFIRMED THAT NEW PRESS LAW IS BEING ACTIVELY CONSIDERED BY GOP AT HIGHEST LEVELS AND HAD BEEN SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION AT THAT DAY'S CABINET MEETING.

COMMENT: IT CLEAR THAT OPPOSITION PRESS HERE IS FEELING PROGRESSIVELY MORE CONSTRAINED AS JULY 28 APPROACHES AND THAT KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXISTENCE OF A DRAFTING COMMISSION IS DOING NOTHING TO INSPIRE CONFIDENCE IN ITS FUTURE. FURTHER, MODERATE FACTION OF PERUVIAN NEWSMEN'S FEDERATION (FPP) HAS BEEN CAMPAIGNING FOR PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE PROPOSED PRESS LAW AND THE REPORT THAT THE CABINET MIGHT CONSIDER SUCH A MOVE COULD INDICATE THAT FPP EFFORTS ARE BEARING FRUIT.
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